



MARAD's Fire Training Center Shines

By Floyd Miras, Senior Representative
Great Lakes Region

MARAD's Great Lakes Fire Training Center teaches the specialty of fighting fires aboard maritime vessels.

The Center provides education and training to American merchant mariners, U.S. government agencies, the commercial maritime industry, and municipal fire departments located in port cities to advance their ability to prevent and suppress fires aboard maritime conveyances. The training is provided at a minimal cost of \$25 per day per student, resulting in cost effectiveness for both the federal government and the private sector.

The Center, located in Swanton, in suburban Toledo, Ohio, was built by and is solely operated by MARAD. It is the only school of its kind serving marine personnel in the Great Lakes and mid-western inland rivers. The primary training objective is to inculcate a lasting respect for and understanding of shipboard fires. The training meets the requirements of U.S. Coast Guard licensing for merchant mariners.

Students are presented with a variety of progressively more difficult live fire situations that require teamwork and decision making. They enter enclosed fire- and smoke-filled spaces encumbered with protective fire suits, helmets, breathing apparatus, and fire hoses.

Since 1982, the Center has trained more than 8,000 people, including merchant mariners and municipal firefighters. The instructors provide tactical hands-on training in the specialized field of fire control and rescue aboard merchant ships.

The training is tailored to the federal government's *Code of Federal Regulations* and the rules/regulations of the International Maritime Organization. The training directly supports missions of the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who receive the training. The program also meets firefighter performance requirements of industry-wide organizations concerned with waterborne commerce and fire prevention.

The Center was honored to have one of its employees earn MARAD's Bronze Medal Award. Michael Romstadt, the Center's supervisory fire instructor for 20 years, was awarded the medal for "superior leadership of the Great Lakes Fire Training Center and development of high-quality professional training programs."



Two trainees extinguishing a fire at the Great Lakes Fire Training Center.



Left to Right: Rear Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., District Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District; Master Chief Petty Officer Bryan R. Clemons; Floyd Miras, Great Lakes Region; and Supervisory Fire Instructor Michael Romstadt

The award was presented at MARAD's 2005 Awards Ceremony in Washington, DC.

Rear Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., District Commander of the Ninth Coast Guard District, recently met with the staff and toured the Center. Admiral Papp acknowledged that the Center's staff has "clearly established a fantastic learning environment with a curriculum of simulated high-stress situations." The Admiral added, "The training provided is of great value to our personnel and I appreciate the opportunity to thank you personally for the great support you provide to our cutter fleet on the Great Lakes."